

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to examination, please amend the subject application as shown below.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the abstract as follows:

An example conventional method of avoiding a printing failure caused by residual bubbles in a print head involves counting from an initiation of a printing operation the accumulated number of print dots formed by the entire print head and, when the count value reaches a predetermined value, executing a recovery operation. Such a conventional method, however, requires the recovery operation to be performed frequently ~~by for the following reason. The recovery operation initiation condition has been determined by performing printing operations under a variety of conditions that cause printing failures and which change depending on the liquid chamber structure in the print head and an image pattern being printed, and then~~ selecting a threshold value for the worst condition. To solve this problem, the nozzles in the long print head are divided into a plurality of blocks, the accumulated number of print dots is counted for each block, the count value multiplied by a weighting value, which is determined according to the position of the block, is compared with a predetermined threshold, and, when at least one of the weighted count values exceeds the predetermined threshold, the recovery operation is executed.